



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

August 2, 2006

News Release

51 illegal aliens arrested at Oklahoma saddle factory during search warrant execution

SULPHUR, Okla. — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents today arrested 51 illegal aliens here who were working at Billy Cook's Harness and Saddle. The arrests took place during the execution of two federal search warrants at businesses associated with the saddle factory. Agents from the Social Security Administration assisted with this operation.

All the aliens were arrested at 320 Muskogee St., Sulphur, Okla., coincident to the search warrants for business records.

The aliens were arrested after they were determined to be illegally residing and working in the United States. Those arrested are all citizens of Mexico, including 30 men and 21 women, ranging in age from 18 to 60 years old.

"ICE is aggressively pursuing illegal aliens at the places where they work," said John Chakwin, special agent-in-charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in Dallas. "The aliens arrested today will be quickly processed and ultimately returned to Mexico. However, if we discover any aliens with outstanding criminal warrants, they will be turned over to the appropriate law enforcement agency so they can answer to those charges. Chakwin oversees the State of Oklahoma and north Texas.

Already this fiscal year, ICE has arrested 445 individuals on criminal charges in worksite investigations and apprehended another 2,700 of their illegal workers on immigration violations. During all of fiscal year 2005, ICE arrested 176 individuals on criminal charges and another 1,116 illegal alien workers in these cases.

This worksite enforcement operation is part of the Secure Border Initiative (SBI), a comprehensive multi-year plan by the Department of Homeland Security to secure America's borders and reduce illegal migration. Under SBI, Homeland Security seeks to gain operational control of both the northern and southern borders, while re-engineering the detention and removal system to ensure that illegal aliens are removed from the country quickly and efficiently. SBI also involves strong interior enforcement efforts, including enhanced worksite enforcement investigations and intensified efforts to track down and remove illegal aliens inside this country.

This is an ongoing investigation.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.